

Life on Misima Post mining; leaving behind a better future?

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INTRODUCTION

As part of their sustainability policy the commitment of Misima Mines Limited (MML) was to 'leave behind a better future'. According to the Prime Minister of PNG, the Hon Sir Michael Somare, the closure of Misima Mines in May 2004 signalled a 'new beginning for Misima'. After 15 years of open pit mining did MML 'leave behind a better future' and what does that 'new beginning' look and feel like for the people of Misima? What did we learn about women's participation? These are some of the questions explored in this paper which is based on research conducted in May this year. The current research builds on an extended period of 16 months anthropological fieldwork in 1990 and 1991, a fieldwork trip in 2000 to investigate the community perceptions of the impact of the mine and several visits in 2000 and 2001 as member of MML's Sustainable Planning Advisory committee.

This paper does not pretend to give an in-depth analysis of the current socio-political and economic situation of the Samarai-Murua District of which Misima is a part. Such an analysis requires more comprehensive research into the many complex issues currently facing the people of this district. Rather this paper sets out to provide a snapshot of the current situation for the people on Misima and to look at strategies that may have contributed more effectively to a 'better future'.

Methodology

The methods utilised to gather data were:

- Focus group discussions
- Semi-structured interviews
- Formal and informal interviews

Where appropriate interviews with Misiman people were conducted in the Misiman language and, if recorded in Misiman, translated by the researcher and checked with local Misiman speakers for accuracy.

Misima Island

Misima Island is situated in the Louisiade Archipelago in Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea. The island is approximately forty kilometres long, east to west, and ten kilometres north to south at the widest point. A steep mountain range runs down the length of the island. There is a road at the eastern end of the island that joined the mine to the township of Bwagaoia and the villages between Bwagaoia and Liak on the northern side of the island.

The population on the island is approximately 14,000 and the twenty or so villages are situated on the coast. Geographical constraints mean that people living at the western end of the island are more isolated from the eastern end of the island where the township and mine are located. This has meant that they had less opportunity for employment and thus less cash has flowed into their communities. Whilst this has

created some difficulties it has also meant that they were less affected by many of the negative impacts of the mine.

The main township of Bwagaoia is located at the eastern tip of the island and is the centre for the District Administration of the Samurai-Murua district. Along with local and district government offices the township has a residential area, a guest house, a bakery, several trade stores (fewer now than when the mine was operating), a tea shop (fast food outlet), a fuel outlet, one second-hand clothing shop, the district hospital, community and high schools.

The mineral deposit mined by MML was located five kilometres north west of Bwagaoia. Production in this open pit mine began in 1989 and the mine was officially closed in August 2004.

Misima society

Misiman society is divided into clans and membership of clans is matrilineal. Women enjoy a relatively high status as they are central to land ownership and food production. Misiman people are subsistence farmers who cultivate their staple food (yams) and other starchy root vegetables in gardens tended by the women. Land is central to the life and well being of the Misiman community. They slash-and-burn the jungle to clear land for gardens. After harvesting the year's crops the cleared land is left fallow and allowed to regenerate for some years until the land is needed for gardens once more. Along with the vegetable crops Misimans rely on food trees such as breadfruit and nut trees to supplement their diet. Traditionally male and female subsistence work is viewed as complementary.

Gold mining on Misima

Although the Misima people were acquainted with small-scale gold mining operations they had no experience with large-scale mining operations and thus unable to comprehend the changes that were to come to their island and effect many aspects of their lives. Generally Misimans were enthusiastic about the mining project as it would provide employment, business development opportunities and improve the quality and standard of living. My investigations in 2000 (Byford 2001), some ten years after mining operations had begun, revealed that the lived experience of this venture had tempered the early enthusiasm.

Whilst there have been clear winners, most notably landowners in receipt of royalties and compensation payments and the flow-ons from this, there are many more losers. The majority of Misimans are not owners of land affected by the mine, and as such are not entitled to royalties or compensation. This large group of Misimans felt powerless to affect the course of events that seemed determined, either directly or indirectly, by the mine.

The differential impact of mining on women

The introduction of large scale gold mining by Placer Dome, operated by Misima Mining Limited, in 1989 fundamentally altered women's relationship with the land, undermining their status, independence and role within the community. In addition, social values rapidly changed, facilitating the breakdown of traditional social structures and the growth of a prominent generation gap, both of which negatively impact on women.

As with mining companies throughout PNG the injection of large amounts of cash and rapid social change associated with mine development widens the gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and leads to a decline in women's economic and social status relative to that of men.

Although there were some very positive impacts for women related to health, education, and income, overall mining had a profound negative impact on women in Misima. The adverse impacts of mining on women in other places in PNG as suggested by Bonnell (1998:2) are shared by women of Misima and include:

- Increased workload due to male absenteeism
- Increased workload due to male wage earners neglecting traditional tasks
- Increase in divorce which has led to abandoned wives and children
- Increase in prostitution
- Increase in domestic violence as a result of alcohol abuse
- Increase in rape
- Increase in unmarried mothers

LIFE ON MISIMA POST MINING

Socio-culturally

Like other aspects of life on Misima in this post-mining era from a social and cultural perspective some things are better and some things are worse.

Social values rapidly changed with the advent of mining, facilitating the breakdown of traditional social structures and the growth of a prominent generation gap, both of which continue to have a negative impact on the community as the Local Level Government (LLG) area manager was quick to point out.

The wards near the town here on Misima are humbug ones and now no one will do anything unless they are given money. They have lost the idea of [voluntary] community work. Those wards further away from Bwagaoia town, where there are good councillors and people maintain traditional culture, they seem to be working better. When people maintain traditional culture and they have a good councillor, things get done.' (Stephen Gaunedi).

Women

If the adverse affects of mining on women were as a direct result of mining activities then one would expect them to be ameliorated when mining ceased. And indeed this was the case I found on Misima with two significant exceptions.

The Police Commander stated that during the time of mining there was an increase in the number of under age girls who became pregnant. This has continued and is creating a significant number of single mothers whose life in the village is very difficult. Additionally if the girls are students they are expelled from school regardless of how they became pregnant. There is no such penalty for the boy or man involved. As far as I could discover not one of these girls has had the opportunity to return to school and continue their education. This has major ramifications for their future.

The second exception is that the number of sexual assault cases in the year 2004 – 2005 is the highest recorded since the previous figures dating back to 1999. The police commander believes that the actual number of cases is higher but women are reluctant to report them in fear of further attacks. One of the reasons for the previous figures being so low is that fewer women reported sexual assault. Even though most women know that sexual assault is a criminal offence they were fearful of further attacks from husbands or lovers who, throughout the life of the mine, were often drunk and violent. Perhaps more women than ever before are reporting cases of sexual assault because the consumption of alcohol by men is greatly reduced in response to lack of income. Some women also told me that they feel more confident to report offences now because the current police commander is genuinely concerned about the plight of women in the community and is determined to enforce the law. The fact that more men have been arrested and charged for rape in 2004-2005 period than for any other period since 1995 is one indication of the police commander's concern to uphold the rights of women.

Sadly it appears that the Louisiade Women's Association is imploding. They have no funding, no major activities, no link with provincial level and no vision. Even before the mine came they were in need of assistance and this need persists. Management of the Misima Guest House, the business arm of LWA, continues to be problematic and does little to improve the financial standing or reputation of the women's association. Despite MML's best efforts to assist them with their financial management, mismanagement of money continues and the Women's Association and current management team seem incapable of calling in debts which would certainly improve their financial situation. For example, the Provincial Government reportedly has outstanding debts in excess of K10, 000. Capacity strengthening is needed in every aspect of the Associations endeavours.

Women's' fellowship groups continue to be the major focus of women's activities at the village level and here women's voices are strong and effective. However, there has been a significant reduction of the number of people attending Church in at least one major village on Misima and reports that church attendance in other villages has also declined. As women's attendance at church has always outnumbered men the drop off in numbers means that it is women who are no longer attending church. This is a significant shift in this community where for many years the church has played a pivotal role in village life and women's presence at church, as well as their prominent role in church related activities, has been at the forefront of community life. Many contribute the decline in attendance to disillusionment with the United Church management. Many women are fed up with the corruption of (male) church officials who reportedly pocket a lot of the collection money and there is little, if any, to use for church related activities. Another bone of contention is the style of preaching where pastors are reported to be verbally abusive to church goers and use their preaching time to inappropriately talk about village affairs. This development would be interesting to monitor to see what, if any, impact it has on village life and relationships.

Whilst the negative impacts on women have been ameliorated since the mine has closed so too have the positive impacts resulting in significant adverse effects particularly in the areas of health and education. As one woman from Eavis said,

As much as we were glad to see the mine go, we women cried when the mine went as we knew we would struggle to find money for many things like school fees and hospital fees. (Dinau Kaliopas)

Although many situations have improved for the women of Misima post mining, which may indeed portend a better future in some respects, the legacy of the negative impacts of the presence and now the absence of mining continues.

The overall situation for women is fraught with difficulties as there is little money, increased costs of goods and services, especially in health and education, less transport, less opportunity to generate income and declining services. Much of this also affects the broader community.

Men

Although many of the issues affecting women also affect men there are some issues that are particular to men. Men who returned to Misima to work for MML had no status in the community and used money as a way to enhance their power and status. Unlike other Misimans, these 'expatriates' overtly challenged traditional views and ways of operating. This created a source of tension and contributed to the breakdown of traditional and respected means of acquiring status.

Furthermore as a consequence of the greatly increased cash in the economy during mining, mortuary feasts became more expensive exercises as mine workers could buy vast quantities of goods. At the time this created an increasing burden to those with minimal or no access to the cash economy who suffered shame because of their inability to sponsor or contribute to feasts to the degree expected in that new environment. At any feast a precise record is kept of all that is given and these are expected to be repaid at some point in the future. In some cases it may be many years before that debt is called in. Now that the mining money has all but gone and there is a great reduction of cash in the economy the burden and shame of people's inability to reciprocate in full has fallen on the younger generation. This problem is expected to continue well into the future.

For the majority of men, who have not gone on to further employment, settling back into village life is proving to be difficult on a number of levels. They no longer have an income so cannot buy goods and services that they have been used to having. Many young men have taken to alluvial mining in search of more gold and more money and this means they are still not taking on the culturally prescribed roles in their family or the broader community. Thus some women continue to have an increased workload due to male absenteeism. These men rightly feel their status has dropped and often bear the brunt of ridicule from their peers who often remind them they now have no money and no garden and will not be able to feed their families. These men are only too keenly aware of this.

Many men employed by the mine had jobs that negatively affected their overall fitness and health. These men are finding the physically demanding tasks of village life quite challenging although most feel that they are getting fitter. On a brighter note, many men who became obese during the mining period have subsequently lost a lot of weight as their diet has improved, their physical activity has increased and so they are now much healthier.

Broader Community

There is a lot of talk on Misima about people being 'back to back'. This term refers to people who are in conflict with one another. The situation has arisen because of landowner disputes originating from the original MOA where the mining company failed to correctly establish landowners. This is causing on going friction in the community between the men and women involved in the different landowner groups. Additionally because of kinship and clan affiliations this conflict is affecting the broader communities as well. Those directly involved often live in the same village and many reported experiencing tensions on a day-to-day basis. No one could recall a situation like this before the advent of the recent mine. Sadly no one can see how it can be resolved and many are distressed at the thought of on-going community tensions that they believe will affect the social life on Misima for many generations.

Family disruption was a major problem throughout the mining years and although there is a lot of reconciliation currently happening within and between families there are family breakdowns of another type emerging. Women whose marriage was based on the money and status that their husbands gave them were willing to put up with a degree of abuse from these men. Now that the men no longer have money or status women are no longer prepared to tolerate the abuse and so are divorcing them. In a similar vein men who came to Misima to work, married Misiman women and had children are now leaving their wives and children behind as they go off in search of other work and other women.

Law and Order

Generally the overall situation does appear better since mining has ceased as revealed in Table 1 and Table 2 below. Although there is less money to buy beer, young boys, aged between 12 and 15 are now making and drinking 'jungle juice', or home brew which is more potent than beer. This is of great concern to the current police commander as he sees the potential for many law and order issues.

Table 1 Complaints to Police, Misima Island 1989 – 1999 and May 2004-May 2005

Year	Adultery	Drunk and disorderly	Sexual assault	Wife bashing	Other assault
1989	16	19	12	1	23
1990	6	11	4	3	30
1991	12	18	3	Not recorded	45
1992	18	36	Not recorded	Not recorded	52
1993	15	14	8	3	50
1994	20	6	4	1	40
1995	20	13	Not recorded	Not recorded	43
1996	20	11	Not recorded	Not recorded	24
1997	10	8	Not recorded	2	24
1998	24	17	3	6	44
1999	44	60	1	4	46
May 2004-May 05	Not recorded	18	26*	Not recorded	35

*This figure includes 19 cases of carnal knowledge, 3 rapes and 1 attempted rape

Source: 1995- 1999 figures supplied by District Police Inspector, 2004-05 figures supplied by Police Station Commander

Table 2 Police arrests on Misima Island 1995 – 1999 and May 2004-May 2005

Year	Stealing	Assault	Rape	Wilful damage	Murder
1995	31	74	2	8	Not recorded
1996	49	33	2	9	Not recorded
1997*	24	47	5	10	1
1998	29	60	3	14	Not recorded
1999**	26	44	2	11	3
2000 (Jan-June)	23	24	Not recorded	3	2
2004-05	13	35	8*	2	Not recorded

* no figures for June

** incidents reported but no arrests made in November and December due to investigation of prisoner found dead in cell

Source: 1995 -1999 figures supplied by District Police Inspector, 2004-05 figures supplied by Police Station Commander

Political and Economic Situation

At a local level some of the basic issues affecting the economic well being of the community are,

- Very little transport to and from the villages.
- Fares cost between K4-10 for a return trip which is expensive for local villagers who now have much less opportunity to generate their own income or get money from ‘wantoks’ who have paid employment.
- Hire of a car or truck is very expensive (at least K200 a day).
- Much less market activity because of reduced cash on island and therefore less opportunity for women to generate cash income.
- Very few opportunities for employment on Misima
- Price of goods in the stores is high. For example pre mining a 1kg packet of rice cost K1 but currently the cost is K3 in town and K3.80 in the village canteens.
- Increased cost of fuel, which has a direct impact of cost of transport. During mining a litre of fuel cost K1.60 currently the cost is K3.50.
- Increased cost of Kerosene. During mining a litre of kerosene cost K1 currently the cost is K3 a litre in town or K3.80 at village outlets. One of the ways families make their kerosene last longer is by not burning their lamps brightly. This often means that school age children are unable to study at night.
- According to many Misimans MML used inferior timber to build houses and as a consequence these houses are in need of maintenance.¹ The combination of the high cost of maintenance and a culture where maintenance is not a high priority means that the houses will probably just continue to deteriorate.
- On Misima, as in other places in PNG, it is always difficult to have money, as you are obliged to assist your ‘wantoks’. In part this has contributed to the situation whereby those who were employed by the mine and constantly under pressure to share their money consequently have little or no savings.

¹ When people realised that the timber used by MML was inferior they began to supply their own building material and these houses are in much better condition than some of those constructed with materials supplied by MML

Olive Miller, a Misiman woman, describes the political situation like this,

Sauga mine inem govaman wali gilasi i galoi yaka Misima hikite. Sauga mine niegon gavaman wali gilasi iyaka hikahek yoho yaka Misima nige ikikte.

When the mine came the government put on glasses and could see Misima. Now that the mine has gone the government has taken glasses off and cannot see Misima anymore.

Given that an election year is fast approaching I suspect that at least the Provincial Government will put their glasses back on, at least until the election is over.

Local Level Government

According to the area manager, Local Level Government continues to be constrained by lack of funding. What little funding they do get is always released late in the year (this years funding is already six months late) and this makes it very difficult to implement their work plan. The time frame submitted by the LLG assumes that they will have funds from the beginning of the year but this is rarely, if ever, the case. However even though funds come through late they are expected to implement all projects in the program in however many months they have left in that year. Failure to do this means they lose money not spent and the following years budget is likely to be cut!

Currently K56, 000 is the provincial government grant for LLG. There are 32 wards on Misima so if the grant was divided equally each ward would be designated K1, 750 funding per year. Given that this amount is insufficient to have any significant impact, the LLG strategy is to target less developed wards. The plan is to use 50% for infrastructure and 50% for social development. However, because of all the buildings the mine put up under the tax credit scheme, are in need of constant maintenance all the funds get used on infrastructure.

LLG are planning to impose a head tax of K10 per man K5 per woman. There are many possible exemptions, including women with 3 or more children and house with no means to generate income. Eighty percent of that money will go towards each ward and 20% to LLG for other projects. However even then the area manager foresees difficulties related community spirit where in the past people worked on behalf of the community with no thought of financial remuneration. Today this is not the case as captured in a statement by the councillor of Siagara village.

Everything these days has a [monetary] price and you cannot give anything away freely like we did in the past. Not even your labour. Now the ways of the past have died. (Richard Samano)

District government

According to the latest annual report by the district administrator (Kape, 2004), community expectations of a better future have not been fulfilled and this makes it difficult for District Government personnel to work with people who are bitterly disappointed by this outcome.

No thought of free labour these days. Social challenges facing youth and women are hardest and we are helpless and must just watch. (Michael Kape)

At mine closure the District Government lost what limited access it had to Tax Credit Scheme and Special Support Grant. Unless other sources are found and developed, according to the District Administrator, the district will have a post closure income totally insufficient to maintain basic infrastructure already in place.

Present constraints relate to funding, transport, workforce, communication and institutional capacity which, he argues, need to be addressed by all levels of government. The majority of the District government workforce is located in outlying LLG areas and so do not have access to government infrastructure - roads, housing, transport, telephone, postal, health and education services. Low morale is compounded by the provincial government neglecting to pay them regularly and by late release of funds which affects project implementation.

The DA lists the outstanding issues in relation to power supply whose ownership recently changed from the District to Matahikan (one of the business arms of Kalopou landowners association).

- ownership of Matahikan questioned by some members of land owners groups
- land valuation of parcels for hydro scheme are too high
- land owners still waiting for land lease payments
- water supply halted because of disputes over land on which the project is to be installed

In short, at the District level the challenges have increased substantially since MML has left because the Provincial Government is not ready, willing or able to carry on where MML left.

This seems to be a familiar scenario in PNG and is related to a very serious and complex issue that I suspect faces all mining companies in PNG. When a mining company comes to an area they become the surrogate government and requests from LLG or DG to the Provincial Government for assistance to carry out government work is often met with the response of 'go and ask the company'.

When a mining company comes to an area it is as if the government abdicates all responsibility for that area and suddenly seems incapable or unwilling or unable to continue even the services it provided before the mining company came. Services that were often minimal in the first place.

Whilst it is true that mining companies have many more resources than the Provincial governments, are on the ground and establish good infrastructure there seems to be little political will and capacity from a government perspective to engage more creatively with the mining sector and District and Local Level governments to address the issues of sustainability. Perhaps the most critical issue to come out of this research is the urgent need for people to really look at 'sustainability,' to ensure that post mining there is an economic future for the mine affected area. This is not something that mining companies can or should do on their own.

Provincial Government

Although I have very little to report from a provincial level I happened to be on Misima when the Governor of Milne Bay Province (MBP) made a rare visit to the District in May. The Governor told the Misimans that MBP is developing at a faster and better rate than other provinces. According to the Governor, MBP does not have the law and order problems, social problems, or logistical problems of other provinces and thus is more developed than other province.

This meant little to the assembled Misimans whose standard of living has recently plummeted, who cannot see how their situation can improve and who have no reason to trust a Provincial Government that did little for them before and during the mining phase and allegedly still owes them in excess of K3 million.

MML and sustainability

The view expressed by Ebe Kasiwabi, a member of one of the landowner organisations, epitomises the view of *all* the Misimans I talked with.

We now go backwards but we thought that the whole point of allowing this mining to happen was that we would go forwards.

He went on to say,

We have no sustainable projects and no economic base to develop and sustain anything. The hydro is not constructed for sustainable economic activity, the electricity is on and off, the telephones are even more on and off. There is only maintenance to be done and that will be the burden of the government and if they don't do it things will just crumble and fall to pieces. We have missed so many benefits.

Indeed there appears to be very few economically sustainable projects despite the long list that appears in Misima Mines 2003/04 Sustainability Report (Placer Dome Asia Pacific, 2004). Here I will only look at a few projects hailed by MML as benefits left behind for Misimans.

The Samaria-Murua Agricultural Research Training (SMART) centre was set up to develop cash crops and showcase different agricultural practices and is supposed to be working with the Department of Primary Industry at the District level. There are many problems related to the centre and the Department of Primary Industry.

At the District Government level, the agricultural officer from the Department of Primary Industry could only produce information on the number of vanilla crops planted in different villages as of January 2005. She could not give me current figures for May 2005 or tell me neither if the vanilla was still growing in any of these locations nor could she tell me about other crops such as nutmeg. She did know that Eiaus School was growing rice but had no idea if that was progressing. There seemed to be few, if any, proactive activities from this office.

The villagers that have vanilla crops ready to harvest don't know what to do next. The SMART centre coordinator has not communicated well with people at the village level. As well as this the price of vanilla has dropped from K600 – 800 per ton eighteen months ago to K19-120 per ton today and no one of the villages I went to

realised that the prices had dropped. They continue to believe that they will get about K600 per ton. To add insult to injury PNG vanilla now has a bad reputation reportedly because of bad practices from some Sepik growers. Another difficulty is that a local Misiman has the only spice license that is allowed on Misima and no one is sure what his intentions are. Unless he buys the spices from local producers they will find it logistically difficult to sell.

Coconut oil production has gone well in a supervised setting on the SMART block but has only yielded small amounts. Whilst this can be exported to Australia, in order to get access to international markets and thus greater financial return, production needs to be in the vicinity of 15 – 20 tonnes per month. Currently production at the SMART centre has been about 4 tonnes per month. An application for AusAID funding to expand the operation to village level has been submitted by MML but even if this is successful it is hard to imagine that this will be sustainable without ongoing external financial and human resources. One of the threats to sustainability is that no one can predict if the oil will be milled at a village level without supervision and with a minimum requirement for some people in the village to contribute 20 hours of labour per week. Another issue is that the logistics of collecting the coconuts and getting them to a central point depends on trucks, drivers, fuel and labour and it is not hard to imagine that if one or all of these variables are missing this will affect oil production. There are many other issues re sustainability and an AusAID representative has recently been to Misima to discuss some of these issues as they also have doubts about its financial sustainability.

No one has yet adopted the new agricultural methods being demonstrated at the SMART centre.

The rice that has been grown by a committed group of women from Gulewa is a long way from being sustainable and has suffered because of inadequate support from the SMART centre coordinator. At present these women must travel about one and a half hours by road transport to and from the SMART centre and when transport is not available they must walk for several hours. Unless the women can learn and apply all the skills required at every stage of rice production in their village and have the technology in situ this project will not be sustainable.

The Hydro electricity scheme according to one mine employee was never meant to be sustainable in the post-mining situation despite claims to the contrary by Misima Mines Sustainability Report (Placer Dome Asia Pacific 2000:4). At best it can provide electricity for 50 days. Then power has to come from the diesel-operated generator. Although MML are planning to leave a large quantity of fuel, at some stage it will run out and when it does so too will the power supply I suspect.

In most villages the rubber hosing that brings fresh water closer to the villagers is still in tact. However because the plastic hosing is above ground and not very substantial it means that it is easily cut as has happened in several villages thought to be the work of angry or drunken young men. Some of the pumps are no longer working and there are no spare parts to maintain them. For various reasons the hybrid toilets have not been successful and very few are in use. The ones that are in use have no lids so are good breeding grounds for mosquitos. The shower blocks have suffered a similar fate.

On going disputes about the ownership of the trust funds continue, as do the related court cases, effectively tying up the money which by now should be assisting the landowning Misima people for whom the funds were established. This brings us to another issue that is causing tension and division in the community. The trust funds have been set up to benefit the landowners and the rest of the community resents this, asserting that the overall impact has been just as great on them and that, unlike the landowning groups, they have not received any compensation. It is pertinent to keep in mind that the *majority* of Misimans are not owners of land affected by the mine, and as such were not entitled to royalties or compensation. Whilst they may have enjoyed indirect benefits they had no negotiating platform with MML and relied on the goodwill of the company for various goods and services. Whilst they acknowledge the considerable burden on landowners whose natural resources have disappeared they feel that they too were affected by the presence of the mine and are similarly affected by the absence of the mine but yet again there is no 'compensation' available for them.

One of the most successful initiatives of MML was training people on-site and sponsoring people to attend courses and training off-site. This initiative has seen a number of men and (comparatively few) women complete a variety of training. As a result of the training there are many more possibilities for people to seek further employment and many have already done so.

The program to eradicate lymphatic filariasis continues to operate. A follow up survey has been done and indicates that there is need for further eradication. The District Health Inspector believed that that Samaria-Murua district would commence that program in 2006.

Although it was always beyond the capacity of MML to have a long-term impact on the services offered by the hospital their support during mining was invaluable. I talk about it here, as it is one example of the many ways that MML became the surrogate government. The Misima District Hospital, built by the Provincial Government, relied on the support of MML for its operations, especially for fuel and electricity. With the mine's support the hospital was able to carry out patrols, acquire more equipment, train more staff, maintain a good supply of medicines, and attend to maintenance. In addition the mine provided transport on a daily basis to allow sick women and/or children to attend hospital for treatment. All of these had a very positive impact on the health and well being of Misima people.

Since the mine has gone and the hospital is once again reliant on Provincial funding, (the budget for this year only came through in May) with some additional AusAID funding, they have already encountered major problems. The doctor who was there for several years and lobbied hard to get the government to provide appropriate support resigned last August and has not been replaced. While the mine was operating pharmaceutical supplies came direct from Moresby and delivery was always on time. Now they come to Misima via Alotua and are constantly held up there. The hospital has not received any pharmaceutical supplies since August last year and until recently been without oxygen for six months. This causes considerable distress for the staff and even more so for patient who cannot be given appropriate treatment. For example, the stock of malaria drugs is very low and stocks of the contraceptive pill are non-existent. The midwifery staff at the hospital has been buying supplies of the

contraceptive pill from Moresby often funded out of their own pockets or borrowing from limited hospital funds. In order to recoup their money and get more supplies they must sell these pills. One packet, which is one month's supply, costs K10. Ten kina per month is beyond the means of most Misimans and the midwifery staff and Misiman women fear there will be a rise unwanted pregnancies.

Promises of a better future

An article by Dr. Robert Boutilier, who was involved in some activities related to mine closure on Misima, examines how a company can close an operation without leaving a legacy of economic collapse and chaos and uses Misima as a positive example. He also boldly proclaims that 'despite the closure of the mine, Misimans can look forward to a brighter future' (Boutilier 2003:36). In complete contrast to his assertion the closure of this mining operation *has* left in its wake a legacy bordering on economic collapse and chaos and there is little evidence of this much promised 'better future'. I am not suggesting that such a collapse is wholly attributable to MML but it is a far cry from their promise of a better future.

Articles like Boutilier's and MML's Sustainability reports, produced as glossy magazines full of good news stories, may be of comfort to the shareholders and to the corporation itself but are cold comfort for those reeling from the experience, whose future is not better and whose daily struggles are now just as hard if not harder than before the mine came.

MML takes credit for opening and closing the mine without major disruption. The reality is that it was more good luck than good management as suggested by the councillor from Gulewa who says,

This transnational company capitalised on the weakness of our people. For a start all those who signed the original MOA are illiterate. Then there is our culture. We are peace-loving people and we don't fight back. There is no difference between here and Bougainville except our culture. Here on Misima we try and avoid conflict. And that is what has cost us a lot and that is why this company came and went without a fuss by us.

Many Misimans expressed similar views. 'One day rich' was the expression used on Misima to describe people on mine pay day – the workers were rich for one day and then all the money was gone, a lot spent on the purchase of beer! In my report to Oxfam/CAA in 2001 (Byford 2001) I suggested that this expression might portend how this phase of Misima's history is described in the future. How disappointing to see this eventuate. Misima is not the 'unmitigated success story' that MML believed it was capable of achieving. (Misima Mines Limited 2000 Vol 2:20) There is not a better future on Misima and the new Misima is looking like the old Misima except now it is filled with people whose expectations of a better future were high and whose hopes have been dashed.

The litany of failures outlined in this paper, should never discount the positive impacts of MML's mining for the people of Misima, the broader district, MBP and the National Government. In addition if this paper seems overly concerned with the negative impacts of mining it is partly to balance the overly positive aspects that mining companies, in this case Placer Dome, all too often emphasise. Mining

companies need to be more realistic in their expectations of what they can contribute and achieve in a host community, more honest in their reporting and more mindful of the myriad ways that mining affects people on a daily basis and will continue to do so for years to come.

What are the lessons from this experience and what strategies may have contributed to achieving a better outcome for everyone on Misima, particularly for the women?

FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE

Political context

If the Misima experience is anything to go by mining companies are not the most suitable organisation to be in charge of community development. While I was on Misima recently it was suggested to me that perhaps mining companies should not get involved in community development as they often do it so badly. I think it is fair to say that one of the reasons they do it 'so badly' is because of the sheer magnitude of need they are confronted with in the host communities. In a host country where there are so many constraints at all levels of government the mining company becomes the surrogate government, a role that they are ill equipped to undertake. In some ways this situation makes it easier for the mining company to carry out their work as they have a considerable amount of power and control over peoples lives. However the relationship that results from this is inevitably problematic. The issue of management capacity of community and government organisations is one of the greatest challenges for projects in PNG and can affect a company's work at local, district, provincial and national levels. There is an urgent need for institutional strengthening and capacity building to be addressed in collaboration with key stakeholders by any company concerned with the social and economic impacts of mining operations. There is an equally urgent need for Government funding to build and sustain capacity.

Although not discussed fully in this paper the failure of Government both before and after mine closure on Misima has had the most impact on the lives and livelihoods of the people on Misima.

Increasing effective participation

My research, both past and present, have led me to believe that one way of increasing effective participation of women *and* men is for *all* stakeholders to engage with three major barriers – cultural context, gender equity and participatory development.

Cultural context

So many of the challenges encountered by the mining company and by the Misimans were the product of two very different cultures involved in the same project with little understanding of each other. There are many aspects of this that I could discuss. But let me talk about communication rules given that good communication between people is fundamental to good relationships and effective actions. This is discussed more fully in a previous paper (Byford 2003) so here I offer a brief summary of the situation. The rules of communication determine the way Misimans relate to one another as well as how they relate to people in the broader community including local, district and provincial government personnel and senior mine employees. From childhood, Misimans are taught to respect other human beings and this respect is

expressed by adherence to certain etiquette requirements, word taboos and avoidance customs. Although there are always exceptions to the rule, consensus is what Misimans strive for and the process of achieving this is another means of showing respect. To confront someone in a position of authority shows disrespect for the person, the position and the *logugui* (authority) that goes with it. Rather than confronting someone directly Misimans take a more subtle approach by going through other people, knowing that the information will eventually get back to the person for whom it is intended. Confronting people directly may generate anger, an emotion that is seen as personally disrespectful and socially disruptive. Anger is not conducive to a harmonious society and should be avoided. For Misiman women, and indeed some Misiman men, the social rules of communication in Misiman society made it difficult for them to engage in any meaningful way with expatriate company personnel. The language and style of communication of expatriate mining personnel were influenced by their own culture as well as the language and culture of the mining company.

There is a need for all stakeholders to understand and respond to the cultural context in which they operate. This is not an easy task not least because there will inevitably be changes resulting from the dynamic interaction of communities with the mining process. However most mining companies already have a tool they can use. Social Impact Studies, if done by appropriately qualified people, identify social and cultural issues that need to be taken into account. There was an excellent Social Impact Study done for MML but never utilised by the company. I suspect that MML did not know how to operationalise the various issues that were raised in study. So perhaps the lesson here is for mining companies to make sure they have somebody on board who can assist them to translate the findings of the Social Impact Study into concrete policies, activities, programs and projects. Other stakeholders who work in these communities and are not familiar with the culture would do well to understand the pertinent cultural aspects of the community before they work there. Whilst it is good to have a code of conduct that talks about respecting local culture and customs this needs to be spelt out in very practical ways so that it becomes meaningful. Despite intentions to the contrary, a mining company and others working in the area can very easily and often unwittingly be disrespectful of the culture and this can negatively affect their relationship with the host community and government.

Gender issues

All too often in development 'gender' is taken to mean 'women' and women are treated as an identifiable single category. 'Men' equally thought of as a single category 'lurk in the background, imagined as powerful and oppositional figures' (Cornwall 1998:46). Gender then becomes something women should be concerned about and men become 'the problem'. In part this situation arises because we know that generally speaking, according to a range of indicators, women's status is lower than men's status and thus there is a need to focus on women in order to move towards gender equity. But we need to remember that the term gender refers to the characteristics and roles that society defines for women *and* men.

Given that generally women's status is lower than men's all stakeholders do need to address the issue of gender equity in order to increase the effective participation of women and decrease the negative impacts on them. This is difficult to achieve when there is gender *inequity* in some or all of these stakeholders organisations. Male dominance and 'gender blindness' (Maguire 1987) within the mining company, the

local and national governments, the host community, NGO's and other can all contribute to effectively deny women their rights as stakeholders.

Governments must be encouraged to protect the rights of all citizens. The PNG government has a constitutional commitment to ensuring gender equality and a number of laws have been passed to aid this process. Very recently the National Executive Council approved the establishment of an Office for the Development of Women. Thus the legislative and policy environment is an enabling one but must be operationalised in order for women to advance. In the case of the National Council of Women, for example, as we heard from Schola yesterday, this means providing material and human resources for the organisation to be able to work effectively.

Mining companies need to match government policy commitments to creating a more gender equitable industry and a more gender equitable society. Additionally they must be encouraged to pursue gender equality, especially if we think of it in the broader context of human rights. In this context it is incumbent on companies to develop and implement strategies that protect the rights of men and women and that pursue gender equality. Indeed there is an urgent need to promote an understanding of gender issues within mining companies. If mining companies had a better understanding of gender concepts and issues they would be in a better position to apply these concepts within their companies. For example they may revise recruitment policies when they realise that in some cases they fail to recruit or employ people based on their actual ability but instead employ women or men in certain positions because of gender stereotyping.

When an enabling environment is created, based on political will or company policy, there is a need to ensure **matching resources** to track and monitor progress towards achieving targets. There is also a need to develop **monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** to track progress in terms of advancing gender equality.

Strategies are needed to correct the false and misleading assumption that 'gender' equals 'women' and we need to make gender issues everyone's issues. One strategy would be to run a series of **Gender workshops**, by appropriately skilled people, to improve the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of communities, organisations, mining companies and government sectors so as to create gender-responsive institutions, policies, programs, and projects. Workshops that examine gender influences in the participants' own lives, cultural and societal expectations of men and women, how systems and institutions create and maintain gender roles and relationships, and how these factors affect the development process. These workshops would

- increase sensitivity to a broad range of gender issues at personal, interpersonal, institutional, and community levels
- develop an understanding of basic concepts and approaches for analysing roles
- improve skills in analyzing and managing gender-related roles, relationships, and situations from a gender perspective

Participatory development

One of the issues that arise when we are looking at effective and meaningful participation by women and men is that gender is not the only difference, nor is it

always the difference that affects people's options or choices. For example rich and poor women not only have a range of concerns and priorities; their experiences of being a woman are also different. The same could be said of rich and poor men. In some settings and for some purposes, their identification as 'women' or 'men' may be less of an issue than their relative prosperity. Not only do men and women of different generations have different priorities and concerns, they also have a variety of views and expectations as a result of their life experiences. The effects of difference then are specific to both the cultural setting and the context and cannot be generalised about with any accuracy. Before making assumptions about people's interests and concerns it is vital to situate individuals within their own social networks. Thus exploring gender differences involves more than simply describing the differences between 'women' and 'men'. Exploring cultural modes of difference and the ways in which these are used to create inequities can make space for sensitization about prejudice and discrimination as an integral part of the participatory process.

Equitable participatory development requires explicit attention to gender relations and, as suggested by Guijt and Shah (1998:13), needs to be grounded in an understanding of the 'dynamics of power, the nature of conflicts and conflict resolution, and the process of social change'.

Participation is not just the mechanical act of being invited to take part in discussions. Rather participation must be developed through a process of mutual respect; a genuine commitment to include all stakeholders and a willingness to work out how this can be best achieved.

Most, if not all, stakeholders in mining process on Misima did not deal well with the complexity of community differences, including age, economic status, socio-cultural issues and in particular gender issues. For example while a handful of women were sometimes consulted, to the best of my knowledge did a thorough understanding of the complexity of gender relations help structure the process, the analysis and any resulting community plans.

Simplistic views of the speed of social change often compromise the empowering potential of participatory development. It takes time for people and groups to decide what they want to see changed, and why, and then to act. It is difficult to anticipate which conflicts such processes of change may provoke or reveal. Participatory development is also compromised when it is used as a tool for mobilisation without a clear strategy for negotiating conflicting interests that arise between participants, and between participants and development agencies.

Effective work that utilises participatory development principles is challenging, time consuming and labour intensive but its benefits far outweigh these issues. However these issues often stop people engaging with this process.

The cutting edge of current development practice can be described in terms of participation, community driven action and empowerment. The broad aim of participatory development is to increase the involvement of socially and economically marginalised people (both men and women) in decision making over their own lives. The assumption is that participatory approaches empower local people with the skills and confidence to analyse their situation, reach consensus, make decisions and take

action, so as to improve their circumstances. The ultimate goal is more equitable and sustainable development.

For sustainable development to be a reality mining companies, government agencies, NGOs, local organisations and communities need to work together to ensure that equality of opportunity, of participation, and of benefits becomes more than just a vision. A vision can give us hope but reality is where we live and reality is what sustains us.

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